

Positions in Public Humanities

Overview:

NEH-supported Positions in Public Humanities are intended to invigorate the interpretation of the humanities at museums and historical organizations. To that end, organizations applying for a Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations implementation grant are invited to request funding for a position in public humanities. Applicants for planning grants are **not** eligible.

Program requirements:

- Positions are entry level and should be designed with a correspondingly appropriate level of responsibility in mind.
- Applicants must have graduated in the last five years from a public history, a museum studies, or a similar MA or PhD program, or from a humanities PhD program.
- Positions should be widely advertised, so as to draw on a national pool of candidates. Institutions are encouraged to seek a diverse pool of applicants.
- Awards support only full-time employees.
- Individuals hired for an NEH-supported public humanities position must be assigned to work on specific aspects of the larger project, related to public engagement with the project.
- Hired individuals are also expected to undertake professional development training by participating in an NEH-organized meeting at a national or regional museum conference. The cost of travel to and from this meeting would be borne by the grantee institution.

Award:

The maximum stipend is \$30,000 for a twelve-month period, to be applied to salary but not to fringe benefits, for a total of \$60,000 for two years. Institutions must provide benefits equal to those offered other staff members. Include in the budget line items for the salary and fringe benefits of the new hire for two years. (NB: This additional \$60,000 budget component will increase the typical maximum implementation award to \$460,000.) Applicants that wish to increase the salary above \$30,000 must use their own funds to do so. Applicants must also use their own funds to pay for the employee's benefits.

These awards may not be used to support

- the salaries of current staff members;
- payments to project consultants;
- the hiring of individuals who hold teaching or administrative assignments during the two-year period; or
- the hiring of individuals currently enrolled in a degree-granting program.

Candidate and screening requirements:

- Applications must be solicited and reviewed by the organization that administers the implementation grant.

- Applicants for these positions should submit a cv, graduate school transcript, writing sample, cover letter, and three letters of reference.
- The selection should be made by a committee convened by the project director. Committees customarily consist of three members: the project director and two other humanities experts who are familiar with the project or bring special knowledge to the project. Committees may include other personnel or scholars who will contribute to the project and may be composed of more than three members. These committees should review all applications and extend an invitation to the top-ranked candidate.
- In addition to their work on the larger project, individuals in NEH-supported public humanities positions should also administer three different types of public programs during their tenure at the institution. They might, for example, organize film and panel discussions, family gallery talks, or an oral history day program.

Sample projects:

- As part of a new emphasis on interpreting slavery throughout its entire historic site, a Southern plantation might create a position for a recent anthropology PhD to conduct outreach and collect oral histories from descendants of slaves. This research and personal testimony would inform the writing of a final interpretive plan for the site.
- An art museum reinstalling its American wing might hire a recent graduate from a public humanities program who would work with curators and educators to devise a high school curriculum interpreting the American collection and would collaborate with the local school district to receive and incorporate teachers' feedback.
- As part of a statewide celebration of women's history, a state humanities council might hire a recent digital humanities PhD to devise a GPS-based app of significant women's history sites throughout the state.

How to apply:

Institutions applying for a position in public humanities should indicate that in the "Nature of the request" section of their implementation grant project narrative. The proposal must also include a separate three-page single-spaced attachment (Attachment 12) titled "publicpositions.pdf." This attachment should discuss

- Recruitment: explain how and where the position will be advertised;
- The position to be filled: describe the proposed position in terms of the tasks to be done and the goals to be achieved;
- Candidate profile: provide details about the ideal candidate and the area in which he or she would work (for example, in the education, digital, curatorial, or some other institutional department);
- Expected outcomes: detail the contributions that the new employee would make to the project, and explain the value added to the larger project by the creation of this position; and
- Hiring process: outline the vetting process for the candidates.